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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: AMBASSADOR'S JULY 8 TRIP TO ADEN

REF: A. SANAA 1700

1B. SANAA 1699

11. (u) Begin summary: The Ambassador's July 8 trip to the southern port city of Aden (reflets) to attend the graduation ceremony of the first group of Yemeni officials trained by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) received favorable coverage in both national and local press. During the visit, the Ambassador also met with the newly appointed Governor of Aden, Dr. Yahya Al-Shaibi, to discuss the training, strengthening Aden's security posture and an Internet-in-the-classroom initiative (ref b). Two Aden-based independent newspapers -- the widely-circulated daily Al-Ayyam, and the weekly Al-Tariq -- carried extensive coverage of the visit underscoring the vital role of Yemeni coastal forces in safeguarding the port of Aden and the Yemeni coastline. Al-Ayyam also published exclusive interviews with Ambassador Hull (text para 5) and USCG Representative to Yemen, Captain Robert Innes (text para 6). End summary.

12. (u) On July 9, Al-Ayyam, an independent daily based in Aden, published a full-page, illustrated story titled "American Ambassador Praises First Graduates of the Yemen Coast Guard and Affirms They Will Be A Deterring Force to Protect Yemen's Security." The article described the graduation of about 20 Yemeni officers as the "first (Yemen) coastal force trained by experts from the U.S. Coast Guard," and said the Deputy Governor of Aden, Abdul-Karim Shaif, praised the efforts of the American experts. The paper also mentioned the Ambassador's discussions with the newly appointed Governor of Aden, Dr. Al-Shaibi (ref b).

13. (u) On July 10, Al-Ayyam published an exclusive full-page interview under the heading "U.S. Ambassador to the Paper: Yemen Exerted Serious Efforts to Increase Security for Aden Port and Yemeni Coasts" (text para 5). The interview discussed various aspects of U.S.-ROYG cooperation, as well as reconstruction in Iraq and the Roadmap.

14. (u) Aden-based weekly Al-Tariq carried a half-page report titled "Aimed at Protection and Safeguard of Shipping at the Regional Waters the Americans Sponsor Training of First Group of Yemen Coast Guard Forces" on July 15. The report says that following the attacks on the USS Cole at the Port of Aden and the French tanker along the coast of Mukalla, there has been an urgent need for the existence of a security apparatus to undertake the responsibility of ensuring safety and security for Yemen territorial waters. Al-Tariq concludes that this will require the establishment of a Yemen Coast Guard.

15. (u) Excerpt from Ambassador's Interview with Aden-based daily Al-Ayyam.

(Begin text)

Al-Ayyam: Could you brief us on the reason for your visit to Aden?

Ambassador: We have three reasons for this visit. First, is to meet with the new Governor of Aden who has a good reputation. Since we are interested in doing a number of things in Aden, it would be good to get to know the Governor at the beginning of his new post and also to know his ideas and explore the issues of co-operation. The second reason for the visit is to announce a new program launched by the Embassy, which is the e-learning program under the Middle Eastern partnership initiative. We have \$ 1.5 million to get Internet into 20 to 25 Yemeni schools. We will choose five schools in Aden and five in Sana'a. The rest will be distributed to other Yemeni governorates. We wanted to inform the Governor about this project and get his support. The third reason is that the U.S. Coast Guard has a team in Aden providing training for the Yemen Coast Guard. Today we are attending the graduation of the first batch of U.S.-trained Yemen Coast Guard officers and I wanted to be here for the graduation.

Al-Ayyam: Your government has a lot of programs for Yemen, some of which are in Aden, such as the de-mining program and the current security training for Aden Airport security. Why don't you have a consulate here as rumors indicate that you have an intention to open one?

Ambassador: I think the answer to that is simple that we feel that we could do all our works in Aden by visiting Aden regularly from Sana'a. Transportation between Sana'a and Aden including air flights are available and the roads are good. This allows us to do several programs though we do not have permanent representation here.

Al-Ayyam: How do you think Coast Guard training would serve Aden Port security and how would that be reflected in the West?

Ambassador: I think the world is watching Yemen make serious efforts to increase security in Aden port and along the Yemeni coasts as a whole. This is not the issue of high sounding statements, but these are doable efforts and do not only include getting the required equipment but also getting the necessary training to enable the Coast Guard force to use such equipment effectively. In addition, the Coast Guard is building a qualified modern institution with the required infrastructure such as the headquarters and maintenance centers to be able to run their operations. Therefore you have to look at what the Coast Guard is doing and not at what is being said about them. If you looked at what Yemenis are doing to improve security in Aden and along the Yemen coast, I think that will have a great effect to change the image that there is no security in this area.

Al-Ayyam: In regards to e-learning, how many schools will have the program? Will the private sector take part in this program?

Ambassador: The program includes 20 schools at least in Yemen and we hope that the private sector will participate. We are currently in contact with the private sector and we have found some interest. We believe that it is natural for the private sector to contribute to this program since Internet training in Yemen for a new generation capable of using the Internet would be very useful for private establishments.

(End text)

¶6. (u) On July 9, Al-Ayyam carried an article based on a July 8 interview with USCG Representative Captain Robert Innes.

(Begin text)

"U.S. Maritime Officer to Al-Ayyam: Aden is Nominated to Establish a Regional Coast Guard Training Center"

In his talk to al-Ayyam, Captain Robert Innes, Maritime Advisor to the Yemeni Authorities, described the graduation of the first batch of the Yemen Coast Guard as a step in a series of others to train the Yemen Coast Guard. He indicated that "the training of the first batch focuses on safety and security and future training will include maritime and engineering skills for all, since achieving professionalism in this area means training to all sailors."

As far as the new training programs are concerned, he said that "new training programs actually began before this one, which ended today (July 8th); even started, and will continue." "We have been working with the Yemen Navy for two years and my job is to transfer knowledge and experience and infrastructure equipment to the leadership, and once this leadership takes over they would be able to do everything by themselves" he added.

Responding to al-Ayyam's question about having a regional training center instead of moving from a port to another and whether Aden is nominated for this; Mr. Innes said that there will be one in the future and that Aden is nominated "but we are looking for an institution for which Aden could act as a branch. The center in Aden will be leading a 500km-long coast with operation centers alongside the coast. Other ports such as Mukalla and Hodeida will have branches too. There is a great benefit in making certain duties such as training central since this is an economic issue too. The Yemen Navy and the Yemen Coast Guard have been clever about this since they have selected the best examples from all over the world and not from the United States alone and I am encouraging them to do this. The system followed in the U.S. may not be the best for Yemen. America is a big country and applying the American system in Yemen may not be the best solution, and the Yemen Government has looked around the world for the models that suit them best."

(End text)

HULL